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August 16, 1962

Dr. Eli Sercarz
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Cambridge 39, Massachusetts

Dear Dr. Sercarz:

Your letter of August 1 is much appreciated.

You raise a number of weighty issues, both "administrative" and "scientific", to which I am not prepared to react briefly. I hope we may have some opportunity to meet during the next year, which may help in going over these problems. I had not urgently contemplated a specific successor for Dr. Nossal in Immunology, but this may be a more realistic possibility for 1964, when we anticipate the completion of some new facilities. But I do feel we can get much farther along with some personal conversation, and hope an opportunity may come up in good time.

To answer one point in immunological theory, the difference between mature and immature cells is not so sharp; since adults can be paralyzed, mature cells are also repressible, but not so easily as immature ones--even perhaps only because they have accumulated more antibody. The only point I am inclined to be dogmatic about is A5 and its corollaries, that antibody specificity depends on a polypeptide sequence and that this is coded in a polynucleotide (DNA until proven otherwise). The other details are strung together to display a coherent theory.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL:edf

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